Remarks

The Office Action dated September 8, 2005, has been carefully considered.

The Office Action maintains the rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nordegren, et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,011,838).

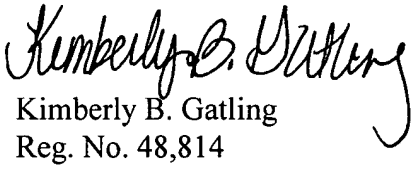
Nordegren is directed towards a machine for milking cows in which the teat cups are subjected to a massage vacuum to operate the teat cups in sequential pulsation. Referring to Column 2, lines 11-16 of Nordegren, the "sequential pulsation" is described as a process "in which the teat liners are pulsed one after the other" versus all of the teat liners being pulsated concurrently. Nordegren further explains in Column 9, lines 65-68 – Column 10, lines 1-9, that the teats 4-7 are subjected to sequential periodic pulses within each of the phases in the milking process (0.5 second delay pulses in phases 1 and 2; and 0.2 second delay pulses in phase 2). Thus, Nordegren teaches a process in which all of the teats 4-7 are subjected to sequential pulsation within a single stimulation phase (phase 1), a single milking phase (phase 2), and a single post-milking phase (phase 3). (Note that the term "phase" as used in Nordegren consists of a plurality of pulsations on the teat cups, as shown in Figures 10-13.)

The present application, on the other hand, teaches on page 2, lines 18-21, that the teats are sequentially stimulated, meaning that that the stimulation phase does not occur for all of the teats at the same time. Rather, a selected teat or group of teats is subjected to a stimulation phase, followed by the sequential subjection of other individual teats or groups of teats to additional stimulation phases. By sequentially staggering the stimulation phases of the teats or groups of teats (not the pulses within a single phase as taught by Nordegren), the natural milk flow intensity of the animal is used during the milking process.

There is no teaching or suggestion in Nordegren to sequentially subject the teats or groups of teats to stimulation phases as taught and claimed in the present application. Furthermore, Nordegren does not teach or suggest a process in which during the stimulation phase of one of the teats or groups of teats, other teats that have already been stimulated are being milked, as taught on page 3, lines 11-12 of the present application. Claims 1-6, as amended herein, more clearly recite these aspects of the present invention. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claims 1-6, as amended, are patentable over Nordegren.

In light of the amendments and remarks presented herein, Applicants submit that Claims 1-6 of the application are in condition for immediate allowance and respectfully request such action. If, however, any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's counsel at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,



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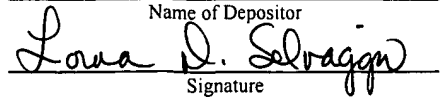

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